

Using a Database To Improve Housing Management

Srem, Poland

Background

In Poland the housing stock owned by local governments was deteriorating, and cities lacked information and systematic inspection processes that would assist them in carrying out the required capital repairs in a timely and cost effective manner. Local governments in Poland received the responsibility for setting rents last year from the national government. To assist in its new tasks of setting rents and assessing capital repair needs and estimated costs, the City of Srem (population 30,000) decided to develop a database on its housing stock, which consisted of 70 buildings and 900 units. The database would serve as a tool to increase city capacity to deliver services efficiently, manage financial and human resources, and increase the comprehensive value of its housing assets.

Innovation

The City of Srem designed and developed an integrated housing management database and information system to help officials manage the city owned housing stock. As part of the process of developing the information system, the city designed unit and building inspection procedures; cost estimating methodologies; and systems for analyzing rent setting policies and the impact of rent increases on housing allowances.

The database includes files on each tenant, unit, building, and housing allowance recipient. The database also can calculate the kinds of repairs that the housing stock requires and estimate the cost of such repairs. When the analysis of the data is completed, information derived from the system will permit the city to assess the backlog of capital repair needs and estimated costs, thereby permitting prompt and cost effective response to the repair needs. In turn, this will help arrest the deterioration of communal housing, and in the long run reduce the cost of maintaining and repairing the city's housing. It will further serve as a tool for rent setting and management, and a database for monitoring rent arrears and housing allowances.

The city encountered several implementation problems. To meet the needs of the city, the database became more complex than envisioned, and it still lacks a self standing accounting system for rent management. Also, changes in local staffing required that training be repeated.

Results

The software for the information system has been completed and provided to the city. The housing units have been inspected, and the data are now being analyzed. The database will help the city better manage its housing assets, develop improved housing repair strategies, and resolve rent setting and collection problems. Similar systems could be established in other Polish cities.

Summary

To provide information for setting rents and assessing capital repair needs and estimated costs, the City of Srem developed a database on its housing stock. The database will help the city better manage its housing assets, develop improved housing repair strategies, and resolve rent setting and collection problems.

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